

A new Target store opened Sunday, March 9th in the new Westwood Village Shopping Center, located at the intersection of FM 2978 and FM 1488 approximately 13 mile east of Magnolia. It has been a long time coming, but the opening of the new Target marked the first of many new stores, shops and restaurants to be opening in Westwood Village bringing hundreds of new jobs and shopping opportunities for area residents. We'll try to not dwell on the additional traffic.

After months and months of site preparation, building construction, rains delays and, of course the ever present road construction, Westwood Village is now officially open. The road construction along these roads is a horse of a different color. No doubt many of you have experienced a delay or two in your travels in recent weeks and months. I get it from very reliable sources that we're not through with those inconveniences quite yet! I also hear that traffic will flow much smoother after all is said and done. I suppose we'll just have to wait and see.

Some of the other new businesses scheduled to open later this year in Westwood Village include: Office Max, Payless Shoes, Brother's Pizza, AT&T Mobile; Clair's, Famous Footwear, Ross Dress for Less, T. J. Maxx, Petsmart, Starbucks, Sally Beauty Supply and Nails of America. There are pending lease agreements with a Mexican restaurant, a mattress company, a pizza place, a dental office, a donut shop, dry cleaners, a tanning salon and more to come.

Preceding the opening of Target were Taco Bell, Chili's and Panda Express.

A special thanks goes to Regency Centers, the developer of Westwood Village.

They have donated a space for a sub-station to our County Sheriff's Department, which will give the center and surrounding area more law enforcement presence and a faster response time when necessary.

My wife, Sandy, and I were driving through the center Monday of last week and saw a large number of cars parked outside of Chili's Restaurant, which had not opened as yet. We walked up to the door and were greeted by a nice gentleman who informed us that they did not open officially until March 6th, but were conducting "training days". We were welcome to come inside, order off a special menu and have lunch for FREE! The only request was that we leave a gratuity for our waitress. We also had an opportunity to make a donation to the St. Jude Foundation. Our sincere hope is that some of the other restaurants coming to the center will be conducting "training days" in the future and YOU can take advantage! It's too bad that the new banks opening in the area don't have training days! Free checking is one thing...

The Magnolia Parkway Chamber of Commerce will be welcoming the new Westwood Village businesses to the area and inviting them to become a part of our young, fast-growing and dynamic membership. If you have a business and want to find out how the Chamber can help your business grow, give us a call at 832-934-2300 for more information. Join us for a breakfast networking opportunity the second Tuesday of every month at Applebee's from 7:30 -9:00 am. We also have memberships available for individuals who'd like to play an active role in the development of their community.

Editor's Note: Reed Campbell is the chair-elect on the Magnolia Parkway Chamber of Commerce's board of directors. To learn more about the business networking organization, visit www.magnoliaparkwaycc.org or call 832-934-2300.